

124. (New) A sealing apparatus, comprising:
a tubular;
a sealing element disposed around the tubular;
an annular area defined between the tubular and the sealing element;
a material disposed in the annular area, the material adapted to retain at least a portion of a fluid supplied to the annular area.
125. (New) The sealing apparatus of claim 124, wherein the material increases in size upon contact with the fluid.
126. (New) The sealing apparatus of claim 124, wherein the sealing element is expandable by the fluid.
127. (New) The sealing apparatus of claim 114, wherein the material and the retained fluid maintains the sealing element in an expanded state.
128. (New) The sealing apparatus of claim 124, wherein the fluid comprises water.
129. (New) The sealing apparatus of claim 124, wherein the material is selected from the group consisting of a polymer, swelling elastomer, bentonite, clay, and combinations thereof.
130. (New) The sealing apparatus of claim 124, wherein the tubular comprises an expandable tubular.
131. (New) The sealing apparatus of claim 130, wherein expansion of the expandable tubular also expands the sealing element.
132. (New) The sealing apparatus of claim 124, wherein the fluid reacts with the filler material to form a viscous mass, for maintaining the seal element inflated.

133. (New) The sealing apparatus of claim 124, further comprising a sealing member for controlling application of fluid pressure to the seal element and for maintaining inflation of the seal element.

134. (New) The sealing apparatus of claim 133, wherein the sealing member comprises a generally tubular valve member adapted to open when fluid pressure within the valve member is at least equal to the pressure of fluid outside the valve member and adapted to close when fluid pressure within the valve member is less than that outside the valve member.

135. (New) The sealing apparatus of claim 134, wherein the tubular valve member is collapsible to close the valve.

136. (New) The sealing apparatus of claim 124, further comprising a sealing member coupled to the tubular, the sealing member having a deformable portion movable between a closed position and an open position for controlling application of fluid pressure to the seal element.

137. (New) The sealing apparatus of claim 136, wherein the sealing member is expandable together with the tubular.

138. (New) The sealing apparatus of claim 136, wherein the sealing member is movable between the closed and open positions in response to an applied fluid pressure force.

139. (New) The sealing apparatus of claim 136, wherein the sealing member is mounted externally of the tubular and is of a material having a Young's modulus greater than that of the tubular.

140. (New) The sealing apparatus of claim 124, wherein the seal element is elastically deformable.

141. (New) The sealing apparatus of claim 124, wherein the seal element comprises an elastomeric material.

142. (New) The sealing apparatus of claim 124, wherein the tubular includes at least one aperture for fluid communication between the seal element and the interior of the tubular.

143. (New) The sealing apparatus of claim 142, wherein the support member includes a plug for closing the at least one aperture to initially prevent fluid communication between the seal element and the interior of the tubular.

144. (New) The sealing apparatus of claim 143, wherein the at least one aperture is openable by deformation of the plug.

145. (New) The sealing apparatus of claim 143, wherein the plug includes a hollow portion and an end cap for closing flow through the hollow portion, and wherein the end cap is removable to allow fluid communication through the hollow portion.

146. (New) The sealing apparatus of claim 144, wherein the plug is adapted to be crushed to open the at least one aperture.

147. (New) The sealing apparatus of claim 143, wherein the plug is removable to allow fluid communication.

148. (New) The sealing apparatus of claim 147, wherein the plug is releasably engageable in the at least one aperture and is adapted to disengage the at least one aperture to allow fluid communication on expansion of the tubular.

149. (New) The sealing apparatus of claim 142, further comprising a sealing member for controlling application of fluid pressure through the at least one aperture to the seal element and for maintaining inflation of the seal element.

150. (New) The sealing apparatus of claim 142, further comprising a sealing member for controlling application of fluid pressure to the seal element and for maintaining inflation of the seal element, the sealing member adapted to seal a plurality of apertures.

151. (New) The sealing apparatus of claim 142, wherein the tubular is at least partially perforated.

152. (New) The sealing apparatus of claim 124, comprising an expandable sandscreen located around the seal, the sandscreen adapted to be expanded by inflation of the inflatable seal element of the seal.

153. (New) The sealing apparatus of claim 124, further comprising a screen member provided between the seal element and the tubular.

154. (New) The sealing apparatus of claim 153, wherein a pore size of the screen member is smaller than the average size of the filler material.

155. (New) The sealing apparatus of claim 124, further comprising at least one reinforcing member for reinforcing the seal element to support the seal element during expansion.

156. (New) The sealing apparatus of claim 155, wherein the sealing apparatus includes a reinforcing member at each end of the seal element to contain inflation of the seal element.

157. (New) The sealing apparatus of claim 155, wherein the reinforcing member is integral with the seal element or separate from the seal element.

158. (New) The sealing apparatus of claim 1, wherein the inflated seal element circumferentially contacts the wellbore.